

Hobbies

Constitution dollars have limited value

By Roger Boye

This week's column answers more questions from readers.

Q—My bank is selling the government's special Constitution silver dollars. Do you think they will make a good investment?

T.R., Addison

A—No. Uncle Sam likely will produce huge quantities of the collectibles, enough to satisfy collector demand for years. Also, coin sales through thousands of retail outlets will assure widespread distribution.

Q—How can I buy newly issued coin sets from Canada and Great Britain?

W.P., Chicago

A—For ordering information, write to the Royal Canadian Mint, P.O. Box 457, Station A, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1N 8V5, and to the British Royal Mint, c/o Barclays Bank of New York, N.A., P.O. Box 2560, New York, N.Y. 10164. The British mint's U.S. office also has a toll-

free telephone number, 1-800-221-1215.

Q—I received an unsolicited mailing from the Chattanooga Coin Co. for the "world's largest coin" containing "a full pound of silver." Is the metal worth the asking price of \$325 plus \$7.50 for postage?

G.B., Elgin

A—One pound equates to about 15 troy ounces, or about \$120 worth of silver at current commodity prices. Also, the item is a privately issued medal, not a coin; it has no legal-tender value.

Q—Why do dimes and quarters have notched edges while cents and nickels are smooth?

P.W. Naperville

A—The notches are relics of a bygone era when dimes and quarters contained silver. Uncle Sam grooved most gold and silver coins to thwart shysters who shaved precious metal from the edges of coins. The grooves made such tampering more apparent to consumers.

Questions about coins or currency? Send your queries to Roger Boye, Chicago Tribune, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60611. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want a personal reply and allow at least three weeks for the answer.